DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 215 584 FL 012 907

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TITLE Issues in Early Core French: A Selective and Preliminary Review of the Literature, 1975-1981.
INSTITUTION Toronto Board of Education (Ontario). Research Dept.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-8881-163-2
PUB DATE Feb 82
NOTE 91p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Age; Curriculum Design; Elementary Education; English (Second Language); *Fles; *French; Immersion Programs; Instructional Materials; Junior High Schools; Minority Group Children; Neurolinguistics; *Second Language Instruction; Teaching Methods; *Time Factors (Learning)

ABSTRACT

This literature review looked at core French (programs of French as a second language taught as a subject) as opposed to immersion French in terms of starting grade, instructional time, instructional materials, children could bring bilingual experience to learning French, starting age is less important than sometimes argued. Neither starting age or grade level should outweigh such considerations as the appropriateness of the curriculum, the continuity of the instruction, the availability of appropriate staff, and the provision of suitable and adequate learning materials. While there are several factors that affect instructional time it appears that for a core program intensive periods of instruction should be incorporated to enhance its effectiveness. Instructional materials will have to emphasize continuity, integration and differentiation, and educational quality if programs are to be strengthened and provide the best outcome. With regard to pupils who learn French as a third or fourth language, the literature is reassuring and suggests that providing them with French will be providing them with an opportunity rather than a problem since the minority language children could bring bilingual experience to learning the French language. (Author)

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ISSN 0316-8786
ISBN 0-8881-163-2

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ISSUES IN EARLY CORE FRENCH

A selective and preliminary review of the literature

1975 - 1981

H. H. Stern*

RESEARCH SERVICE

issued by the
Research Department

FL012907

February 1982

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE CITY OF TORONTO

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since this report had to be prepared at rather short notice I was particularly grateful to have the help of Joan Culley of the Library of the Toronto Board of Education and of Alice Weinrib of the OISE Modern Language Centre in finding references. I also thank Jim Cummins for his help with certain papers and Ellen Jeske for typing the report.

Terminology: I have used the term *"Core French"* as it is used in the Ontario Ministry of Education Guideline to refer to programs of French as a second language taught as a subject (in contrast to Extended or Immersion programs). *"Early Core"* refers to Core French in the primary or junior grades.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page No.
	INTRODUCTION	1
	The nature of research on early language teaching	1
	Plan of the report	3
	Documentation	5
1.	THE AGE FACTOR	8
	Changing views on the age factor	8
	Neurological arguments	9
	Empirical evidence	10
	Language learning not monolithic	11
	Differentiated view on language learning	11
	Conclusions on the age factor	12
	Documentation	14
2.	THE TIME FACTOR	28
	Trends of development	28
	What is the upshot?	31
	Documentation	33
3.	FRENCH FOR THE MINORITY LANGUAGE CHILD	41
	The problem	41
	Experience and research	42
	Conclusion	46
	Documentation	48
4.	PEDAGOGY: GOALS, METHODS AND MATERIALS	56
	The current scene	56
	Issues in curriculum design for early core French programs	59
	Documentation	63
	Part 1: Reactions to the NFER Report	64
	Part 2: Other recent writing on pedagogy	69
	CONCLUSION	77
	Policy options	77
	Research implications of the review	80
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	82

INTRODUCTION

The Toronto Board of Education--like other jurisdictions--is at present faced with decisions concerning the core French program in the early years of schooling and wishes to take these decisions in the light of the best evidence that research can provide. The purpose of this report is to gather and evaluate key titles among the currently available research literature, covering approximately 1975-1981, and to indicate directions of thought that could be helpful to those responsible for policy decisions.

The nature of research on early language teaching. There is a considerable literature to draw on. Its quality as research is however patchy. As long as twenty years ago, international studies at the Unesco Institute for Education in Hamburg (Stern, 1967; 1969) were intended to stimulate systematic research on an international scale in this area. Only few major investigations were in fact initiated. One of these was, for example, the Pilot Project on French in the Primary School in Britain (*Burstall et al, 1974), a ten-year national research, development and evaluation study. The early immersion studies in Canada which began in the midsixties were also stimulated by this demand for research. But unfortunately similar research was not undertaken until quite recently, on the core program. A number of investigations were carried out in USA, Sweden and Germany in the 1960s and 1970s.

Moreover, the issue of early language teaching gave rise to fundamental discussions on the optimal age for language learning. There is also a sizeable literature on the pedagogy of teaching languages to younger children.

*A full bibliography is at the end of the report. Titles that are discussed in one of the documentation sections are asterisked.

Finally, there has been a veritable explosion of research during the 70s on second language learning which obviously has some bearing on the topic of this report. For a recent review of these writings see, for example, Stern and Cummins, 1981.

In other words, the literature one has to keep in mind ranges from sophisticated research writings in a theoretical framework to down-to-earth, practical accounts of personal experiences, speculative writings, and polemical arguments on the merits and demerits of early language teaching. Since the development of this research has not been systematic and well planned, one cannot take it all at face value. Nevertheless, it can be said that, on the whole, this literature has helped to highlight critical issues even if, in spite of such a long period of research and debate, these issues have not been resolved.

The available literature on the entire question of languages for younger children was reviewed in 1977 in a survey paper by *Stern and Weinrib (1977/78) and the research issues were considered in the broader context of second language acquisition in childhood in an excellent and well-documented book by *McLaughlin (1978). The positions described in these two sources is still valid today and would need little modification.

It can be argued that the questions to which the present report has been asked to address itself are to a certain extent themselves the result of this research literature. The writings on this subject can claim, directly or indirectly, to have helped administrators, practitioners, and board members to identify critical issues. It is not surprising therefore to find that the issues listed by the Board as critical are the ones that the literature has also debated, although it may not have solved them. It must however be pointed out at the outset that the literature does not necessarily speak in very specific terms to the particular circumstances that are the Toronto Board's immediate

concern, that is, the teaching of core French in the primary and junior grades. We must obviously cast our net wider and take into account writings on the learning of languages by younger children in general and apply what we learn to the particular circumstances we have in mind.

Plan of the report. In the following chapters of the report we will take in turn each of the main issues, listed in Report No. 6 of the French Programs Committee, and discuss them one by one:

1. the age factor;
2. the time factor;
3. languages for the minority child;
4. pedagogy: goals, materials, and methods.

Each chapter consists of two sections: (1) an interpretive overview and assessment of the literature on the particular issue, and (2) documentation consisting of a summary and comments on selected titles. In the conclusion to the report, the policy options arising from the report are briefly summarized and implications for research are outlined.

The report is described as selective and preliminary: selective in that there was not sufficient time to weigh up and include all potentially relevant writings; preliminary in that there was not enough time to discuss the general tenor of the report and the various assessments made in it with a sufficient number of knowledgeable people to ensure that inadvertent errors of judgement had been eliminated.

It should also be pointed out that the report does not deal with all aspects that have been studied in the research literature. It does not deal with those that were not part of the brief. For example, much of the literature is concerned with the question of whether other school subjects suffer when French or another language is introduced into the primary school. The literature continues to be reassuring in this respect (e.g. Holmstrand, 1979), and sometimes

claims cognitive benefits (e.g. Ginsburg et al, 1981). No further reference is made to these other research questions.

Introduction: Documentation

Stern and Weinrib, 1977/78. This is a survey paper and review of the literature on foreign languages for younger children. After a brief historical background it describes recent trends in several countries: USA, Canada, Great Britain, France, and other European countries. The article assesses recent trends under the headings of optimal starting age, time allowance and distribution, language pedagogy and educational goals. In conclusion the article ends with this observation:

> "Although a much more circumspect attitude toward languages for younger children has been expressed everywhere, there is considerable reluctance among those involved in these pioneer efforts to view language teaching for younger children as a failure and to abandon it. A more realistic appreciation of the contribution of second-language learning to the language education of young children has been observed and a recognition of the need to spell out more precisely 'the conditions of success' . . ." (167).

Comment: This survey should be consulted for additional information and for earlier references to the development of language teaching for younger children, which provides the background to early core French.

Stern, in press, (a). This article for a forthcoming international encyclopedia of education to be published in 1983 reviews the recent history and current trends in language teaching at the elementary level. In the second part it examines four major issues in order to find out why early language teaching is still controversial after so many years: (1) the optimal age question, (2) questions of language pedagogy, (3) the role of research, and (4) policy issues and educational decisions. Its analysis leads to the conclusion that the following reasons explain the difficulties and disappointments of early language teaching:

> "(a) (Early language teaching) misguidedly insisted on demonstrating that early language learning is better than later learning (rather than being satisfied with

proving that early learning is feasible and educationally defensible); (b) it underrated the pedagogical issues and did not treat them consistently enough; (c) it did not pursue a sufficiently sustained, broad, and internationally coordinated program of research and development; and, lastly, (d) decision-makers in this area did not recognize the limitations of the research evidence and the need for making value judgements about the stage and scope of language teaching in the primary school curriculum" (17).

Comment: This article offers a brief overview of the entire development of early language teaching from the 1950s to the present and a critical assessment from the perspective of the 1980s.

1. THE AGE FACTOR

Changing views on the age factor

Of all the issues to be considered, the age question has undoubtedly produced the greatest volume of literature. It has been debated and investigated, on and off, for thirty years with some studies going back even earlier, e.g. Tomb (1925) or Thorndike (1928). But in spite of this there is to date no absolutely satisfactory and conclusive answer to the two basic questions: are children better language learners than adults, and if so what is the best age to start a second language in school?

> The 1975 position (still up-to-date today) is extremely well presented by *Smythe, Stennet and Gardner (1975). A quick overview with references of the essential issues can be found in *Stern and Weinrib (1978:162-164). *McLaughlin (1978: ch. 3) offers a very readable and detailed exposé on the age question. The empirical evidence is concisely summarized by *Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979). *Brown (1980:41-63) offers a full and readable theoretical analysis of the issue. Other useful presentations can be found in *Genesee (1978) and *Chun (1980).

In the 1950s and 60s it was widely believed that an early start in the primary or junior grades of the elementary school had strong scientific backing. In the 50s the views of Wilder Penfield, the eminent McGill neurosurgeon, on the plasticity of the young brain gave support to this view. This was reinforced in the 60s by Eric Lenneberg's book (1967) on the biological foundations of language. Much of the shift of emphasis on languages from the secondary to the elementary school was based on the belief in "the earlier the better".

While this body of opinion was extremely influential in giving an impetus to early language teaching, it should be pointed out that it was questioned as a scientific fact by several writers in the 1960s (e.g. Ausubel 1964). The answer to the two questions above has remained in doubt until today.

Some educators and also groups of parents are not aware of the lack of evidence for the dictum "the earlier the better". They believe it is "obvious" that early is better, and they are so convinced of this that they regard any questioning of this view as flying in the face of "scientific" evidence or as a smoke-screen for retrograde policies on the part of educational authorities. They automatically applaud an early start as right and "progressive".

The decision to start French early may be right on educational grounds because of the importance of French, but if one wishes to base policy on the evidence of research, there is little support in the available research literature for regarding an early start as imperative.

Here is a sampling of points of view derived from reviews of the recent research literature:

> Smythe, Stennet and Gardner (1975): "it is a myth of contemporary folk-linguistics that children are superior FL students" (15).
>
> "The weight of the evidence that does exist...supports the position that in many respects the young child is neither as efficient nor as successful in learning a second language as the older individual" (19).
>
> McLaughlin (1978): "the critical period hypothesis remains very much a hypothesis at the present time" (59).
>
> "Most authors would probably agree that the optimal time to introduce a second language is at birth...Once a language has been established as the child's first language, research suggests that a later, rather than an earlier, start in the second language is better" (131).
>
> Stern and Weinrib (1977/1978): "To end these arguments and counter-arguments, it is probably best to assume that no overall optimal age ...can be conclusively determined...the practical implication...is ...that...second-language education could be placed anywhere in the curriculum. But 'instruction at an early age is in itself no guarantee of success'..." (1978:163-4).

Neurological arguments

The neurological arguments which in the 1950s and 1960s lent so much support to the critical-age hypothesis have evaporated. The research interest

in neurolinguistics has enormously increased since Penfield and Lenneberg. But assertions that were confidently made in the earlier period about the plasticity of the young brain and about lateralization of the two hemispheres of the cerebral cortex before puberty have given way to a number of different hypotheses which relate neural to language development. Genesee (1981) has recently reviewed some of these studies. The findings which are extremely tentative are outside the concerns of this paper. But they do not point to a particular period in neurolinguistic development that could be interpreted in terms of a language teaching policy. *Krashen, whose earlier researches (1973) had thrown doubt upon neurolinguistic arguments for a critical second language learning period, in his recent book (1981) concluded his views on the "somewhat unsettled" scene of neurolinguistics in this way:

> "While child-adult differences in second language acquisition potential do exist, the evidence for a biological barrier to successful adult acquisition is lacking" (81).

Empirical evidence

Several studies have tried to examine the age factor empirically, e.g. *Oller and Nagato (1974), *Cummins (1981), *Ramirez and Politzer (1978), *Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978). The best introduction to all these studies is an ingenious and very concise review and analysis of some 20 odd studies by *Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979).

Since most of these studies have shown the superiority of older over younger learners, Krashen and his colleagues have usefully introduced a distinction between rate of learning and ultimate proficiency. With this distinction in mind they are able to show that while older learners are faster learners, those who start younger may ultimately reach a higher level. This point has also been taken up by *Genesee (1978) who argues that if learning is started younger, those who had an early start can, when they reach the maturity of older

learners, advance all the faster in the L2: "The advantages which derive from late instruction will also be conferred on the learner who begins early" (153).

Language learning not monolithic

In assessing the merits of early versus late language learning it is important to bear in mind the findings of Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978) who demonstrate in a very fine study of English native speakers learning Dutch the different aspects of language learning, but again indicating the advantages of older learners. They find that (a) all age levels improve with time; (b) older learners are better than younger ones in morphology, syntax and vocabulary, and (c) there is little difference in mastery of pronunciation.

Differentiated view of language learning

A more differentiated view of language learning is also indicated by some recently developed theories and concepts which have bearing on the age issue. (1) According to a Piagetian or cognitive approach to second language learning younger children before puberty acquire their first language in a relatively early stage of cognitive development. Therefore if they also learn a second language during childhood, they learn it in a less conscious way with few intellectual inhibitions. Krashen (1981) has introduced the distinction between the less conscious acquisition processes versus the more deliberate processes of language learning. If there is any special advantage to early language learning it might lie in the fact that young children can handle a new language as something to be acquired intuitively rather than learnt through self-conscious processes of study (Rosansky, 1975; *Krashen 1981).

(2) A similar distinction to acquisition-learning has been suggested by Cummins (e.g. 1980; 1981). Cummins differentiates between basic communicative interpersonal skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). While language proficiency requires both these, children can be regarded as more

responsive to BICS and adolescents and adults who respond to a more scholastic approach to language can develop CALP to a greater extent.

(3) Another interesting view has been advanced by *Schumann (1975); it can be described as an affective theory. It suggests that children have a "more permeable language ego", that is, they are more open to the social and emotional influences of their language environment in which they happen to be and would accordingly be more receptive to a new language in the environment.

These new ideas and concepts which have emerged over the last few years since about 1975 have a certain face validity. They suggest that in certain ways there may be different degrees of emphasis in learning a second language in childhood, in adolescence, or in adulthood. They further suggest interesting hypotheses for investigating possible differences between adults and children as language learners. They also imply that the language curriculum might have to take these characteristics into account, but <u>they do not point to a clearly defined all-purpose optimal age</u>.

<u>Conclusions on the age factor</u>

In sum, many aspects enter into second language learning. (See particularly *Brown, 1980 for a good and comprehensive analysis). No one age or stage on developmental grounds stands out as optimal or critical (*Stern, 1976; for a similar interpretation see also Daigle, 1977). Child and adult language learning have much in common (*McLaughlin, 1978) but there are important differences in rate of learning in favour of the older learner (*Krashen et al, 1979) and there are differences in learning different aspects of language (phonology, syntax, etc.) and in the psychological approach to language learning (*Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978; *Brown, 1980). The main implications can be summarized in the following questions and answers:

Question	Answer	Comment
(1) Can young children of school age learn an L2?	Yes	Languages have been taught to young children under school conditions for 25 years at least. There are no practical or theoretical reasons why this practice should not be continued.
(2) At what age can such language teaching be started?	At any age	No single age group stands out as being outstandingly bad that one could identify a stage below which or above which it would be inadvisable to start L2 teaching; nor is there a stage which is so clearly superior that it should outweigh any other considerations.
(3) Is there an optimal or critical stage for L2 learning.	No	The critical age theory which was widely held 20 years ago has become increasingly eroded.
(4) Does that mean there are no differences between younger and older learners?	No	Research has shown a good many similarities between learning an L2 in childhood, adolescence and adulthood. But there are likely to be age-specific differences in emphasis on cognitive, affective and social aspects of L2 learning as well as differences in responsiveness to different features of language between children, adolescents and adults. These are not yet well documented.
(5) Are younger or older learners more efficient as language learners?	Older learners	On straight comparisons in test-like situations older learners appear "more efficient", i.e. they learn faster than younger ones.
(6) Does the research suggest that languages should not be taught to young children?	No	If, however, it is decided to teach young children, it should not be done for the wrong reasons, i.e. that young children are better learners. It should be done (a) for educational reasons, and (b) for the advantages accruing from increased time.

The Age Factor: Documentation

(Notes arranged in chronological order)

Oller and Nagato, 1974. This is a study of the long-term effects of a FLES program. It was undertaken in a private school system for girls in Japan which provides for a six year sequence of FLES in addition to a six year sequence of English as a foreign language at the junior high school and high school level. Since not all the students in the junior high and high schools have come through from the system's own elementary schools there are therefore some students who will have had FLES and others who will not. Consequently it is possible to examine the long-term effects of FLES by comparing FLES and non-FLES students. Both groups of students were tested at grade 7, 9, and 11 with the following results:

> "The first comparison shows a highly significant difference between FLES and non-FLES students at the seventh grade level. This difference is reduced by the ninth grade though still significant; at the eleventh grade it is insignificant" (18).

Oller and Nagato interpret these results as showing "that under certain conditions FLES may not be of lasting benefit" (18), because in spite of the fact the FLES students had six years of English, the non-FLES students "were able to overtake them by the eleventh grade".

*Comment: The authors use their findings to counteract what they describe as glowing but quite distorted presentations of the effect of FLES. In this respect their study, although more limited in scope, is similar in its findings and interpretation to the *Burstall report. It should however be noted that exactly as in the British study the teaching militated against the FLES students. No account was taken of the six years of previous study by the FLES students. After their first year in junior high when they, like the Non-FLES students were taught with a beginners program they were mixed indiscriminately with the non-FLES students. In view of that it is remarkable that up to grade nine there should be a noticeable difference, and it is not surprising that that difference should be washed out by grade eleven. Oller and Nagato's statement that the non-*

FLES were able to "overtake" the FLES students is an overstatement. They should have said that they were able to "catch up" with them. The results show that there is still a difference in favour of the FLES students but it is small and is statistically non-significant.

Smythe, Stennet and Gardner, 1975. This is an outstandingly good review and discussion of the age question, bringing together much of the evidence available in 1975. It forms a good baseline for a review from 1975 to the present. The article is well documented, and some of the quotations are helpful in giving background to present discussions. The position adopted in the article is entirely tenable today and has in fact been reinforced rather than superseded. The authors have made an attempt to consider the available evidence and to weigh up judgements of the period 1950 to 1975, and it is not a polemic against early language teaching.

Conclusions summarizing the point of view reached are:

> "it is a myth of contemporary folk-linguistics that children are superior FL students" (15).
>
> "The weight of the evidence that does exist...supports the position that in many respects the young child is neither as efficient nor as successful in learning a second language as the older individual" (19).

Nevertheless the article supports the idea of FLES on the grounds that longer-term programs provide more time, as long as such programs are clearly articulated and integrated with later language programs (19) and provided that their objectives are well defined and plans made to achieve these objectives (20).

> "If the intent is to develop linguistic skills, the resulting program must focus on these. If the aim is to promote cultural understanding, pedagogical techniques must be employed to achieve this. If the intent is to stress both linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes, the program must focus on both. There is little evidence to suggest that cultural understanding will develop simply because a young child is exposed to a second language" (20).

Comment: The article really stresses all the essentials, and while positive about FLES without claiming any special magic for younger children, lays great emphasis on good planning, articulation and evaluation. Excellent as a base line.

Schumann, 1975/1980. This is a seminal paper in two ways: it has been valuable in arguing for the recognition of affective factors in second language learning and bringing together much of the evidence for this relatively neglected area. At the same time he has developed in this paper a theory which attempts to explain the superiority of younger learners on the grounds that the affective factors (attitude, motivation, and empathy) "are generally favourably tuned or at least sufficiently neutral so that when exposed to the target language, the child's cognitive processes will function to produce language learning". Schumann makes two assumptions: (a) that the child is in effect a better language learner and (b) that affective factors are the initiators of the language learning process.

Comment: While this can only be regarded as a theory and not as evidence, Schumann has rightly drawn attention to the fact that affective factors may operate differentially at different stages of maturity and influence language learning positively or negatively.

Stern, 1976. This paper discusses the optimal age issue with reference to the British Report on the Pilot Scheme (Burstall et al, 1974) and relates its findings to questions raised in Canada about language teaching at the elementary level. It is critical of the notion of an optimal age and in that respect criticizes the NFER report. Instead of searching for, or debating, an earlier or later

start as ideas (the relative merits of the Penfield thesis or the Burstall thesis), it advances the assumption that no single stage in life is optimal in general.

> "Neither early nor late second language learning are of themselves likely to be effective. This third theory, then, places much more onus on the environment to create conditions under which learning can occur. It does not assume that older learners automatically have an advantage by virtue of being older nor does it assume that younger learners automatically have an advantage by virtue of being younger. Each age of language learning has its own particular advantages and disadvantages. Therefore rather than asking whether language learning at such and such an age is effective, the question should be: How can one create an environment in which effective language learning can occur?" (291)

And for doing so the article recommends as criteria:

> "the better you want to learn French, the earlier you should begin, the more time you should spend on it, and the more you should have the opportunity for using the language in real acts of communication" (289-90).

Canadian experience, the article argues, concurs with the findings of the British report in that

> "small dollops of oral French administered once a day over a period of two or three years in the elementary schools, do not automatically lead to any 'substantial gains in achievement' for those who start early" (287-8).

Genesee, 1978. One of a set of recent papers, which attempts to assess the implications of views and studies which question or deny the special advantages of early language learning.

In the first place Genesee goes over the argument for "early is better", then reviews the arguments advanced against it and a few research findings in the same direction (e.g. Fathman and Burstall): "there is a rather noteworthy consensus among these studies concerning the learning rates of students at different ages--older students seem to be more efficient learners than younger students" (1978:150).

Genesee sets against this the time issue: "duration of instruction is indeed an important predictor of second language learning" (1978:150). He bases himself on Carroll and immersion research: an early start provides more opportunity for instructional time. If the studies have begun early older students can benefit all the more from the greater efficiency of older learners.

Therefore, Genesee argues, these are good reasons for an early start. However, it all depends on what level of proficiency is expected. Moreover, another factor that has largely been ignored is how the time has been used. The pedagogical techniques must be adapted to the different age levels of learners.

Genesee makes the perfectly valid point that "the advantages which derive from late instruction will also be conferred on the learner who begins early" (1978:153) and he concludes:

> "The combined advantages of extended time and opportunities furnished by early instruction probably make it more conducive to attaining the higher levels of secondary language proficiency, provided the full advantage is taken of them through effective pedagogy" (1978:153).

McLaughlin, 1978. This is a very comprehensive, readable and balanced study of the whole issue of second language acquisition in childhood. Chapter 3, "Language Acquisition and Learning in Childhood and Adulthood", specifically deals with the age issue under two subheadings: "The Critical Period Hypothesis", and "Second Language Acquisition and Learning in Children and Adults". On the first issue, it recognizes that the critical period hypothesis has been more and more eroded and that therefore there is more hope for language acquisition and learning at later stages in life than had been presumed when the hypothesis was formulated in the 1950s. His overall conclusion, on a review of much of the available literature is:

> "the critical period hypothesis remains very much a hypothesis at the present time" (59).

> "While there may be a critical period for some aspects of first-language acquisition, there does not seem to be evidence of biological limits to second-language acquisition or learning" (71).

On the comparison between children and adults as second language learners McLaughlin reviews some of the evidence we have also considered and notes (a) that children and adults go through similar processes of learning, and (b) that in experimental situations the adult is superior to the child because of greater intellectual maturity in the test situation:

> "Anecdotal and impressionistic evidence that children are superior in second-language acquisition most likely stems from nonlinguistic and nonbiological factors such as amount of exposure, motivation, lack of inhibition, and other personality variables. When the child is placed in an experimental situation where these factors are controlled or do not operate, performance is inferior to that of an adult" (69).

Two further chapters in this book are also relevant to the issue of optimal age, one on the successive acquisition of two languages in childhood, and another on second-language programs in the elementary school. They further confirm the guarded trend of the interpretations of this author, e.g.:

> "Most authors would probably agree that the optimal time to introduce a second language is at birth...Once a language has been established as the child's first language, research suggests that a later, rather than an earlier, start in the second language is better" (131).

Comment: I personally regard this last statement as too sweeping, but this is how McLaughlin interprets the literature on the whole.

Ramirez and Politzer, 1978. This is an interesting paper on the comparison of children and adolescents learning an L2. But the situation studied was different from that of FSL in Toronto elementary schools. The study compared children all of whom had entered a Spanish-English bilingual program as monolingual Spanish speakers with a group of some 20 adolescents who had also

come to the USA as monolingual Spanish speakers (a few had another language background). All were given the same English comprehension and production tests, each test item tapping a particular aspect of English morphology or syntax in a meaningful context, e.g. The girl writes/The girls write, pointing to two pictures illustrating these distinctions. In response to tests of this kind the older learners have a clear advantage over the very young learners (kindergarten). On the other hand, among the younger ones there seems to be a clear progress from K to grades 1, 3 and 5, while the older learners in spite of their initial advantage level off.

Comment: While this study in isolation is difficult to interpret, it certainly shows that the language learning of the younger ones is not inevitably superior to the older ones. In some ways the study neatly illustrates Krashen's two dicta: "older is better initially", but "younger may be better in the long run".

Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978. These two investigators are among a few who have attempted to study the characteristic features of second language acquisition at different stages of growth. In this study, undertaken in Holland, they have studied the language learning of English native speakers who learn Dutch in a Dutch-speaking environment. They rightly make the point that language learning is not monolithic. A variety of skills come into action and progress may not be the same for, say, pronunciation, mastery of the syntax, or vocabulary.

Their subjects consisted of four groups: child beginners, adult beginners, and child advanced learners and adult advanced learners. The beginners groups consisted of individuals who had recently arrived in Holland: 3-5 year olds, 6-7 year olds, 8-10 year olds, 12-15 year olds and adults. The advanced

learners were 6-7, 8-10, 12-15 and adults. All the groups were tested for pronunciation, auditory discrimination, morphology, vocabulary, sentence repetition, and translation.

Their findings:

1. All age levels improve.
2. Older learners are better than younger learners in morphology and syntax.
3. Older learners are better at vocabulary than younger ones, adults however slightly worse than teenagers.
4. No or only small differences in phonological mastery.

They offer no ultimate interpretation but ventilate a number of possible interpretations and explanations. If anything it seemed that adolescents are in the most favourable language learning position (an interpretation they curiously reject), but they certainly do not entertain the popular belief that young children have an obvious advantage. What they feel is important are the conditions under which learning occurs. The younger ones--children and adolescents--are exposed to the demanding conditions of learning Dutch in Dutch schools. Adults are more varied in their language contacts and are rarely in situations in which Dutch was crucial.

Comment: Although the language learning studied in this investigation is very different from core French, it offers very convincing data on the age issue, and reinforces the view that there is no special magic about the language learning of younger children.

Krashen et al, 1979. This is a short but extremely valuable article because it reviews, summarizes and analyzes much of the available research literature on the relative advantages of early versus late language learning. It intro-

duces an important distinction which previously had not been made or at any rate had not been made so clearly. Instead of merely trying to find out who is better, earlier or later learners, it distinguishes between ultimate proficiency level and rate or speed of learning. From our point of view the quintessence of the paper is the statement that

> "adults and older children in general initially acquire the second language faster than young children (older-is-better for rate of acquisition), but child second language acquirers will usually be superior in terms of ultimate attainment (younger-is-better in the long run)" (574).

The article includes five tables, each summarizing 4-5 different studies, leading to a specific generalization:

1. Studies on child-adult differences in ultimate proficiency agree that those who arrive (in the country of immigration) as children attain higher levels of proficiency than those who arrive as adults.

2. Studies which compare the rate of second language learning in adults and children show that adults are faster than small children but not always better than 12-15 year olds in early stages of grammatical accuracy.

3. Studies which compare informal language learning in older versus younger children, exposed to the language for the same length of time, show that older children acquire early syntax and morphology faster than the younger ones.

4. The same applies to older and younger children in formal settings (i.e., classrooms or experimental studies).

5. This final table is particularly relevant to the questions of interest to the Toronto Board. It summarizes "Older Children Catch-up Studies" showing that older children catch up to children who have had earlier FLES.

Comment: This very helpful and searching review suggests as a generalization for our purposes that, purely from the point of view of ultimate attainment, the literature offers no compelling advantage for starting a second language in grade 1 over grade 3 or 4. The generalization "younger is better in the long run" applies more to learning the L2 informally in the environment than to classroom learning.

Chun, 1980:181-198, in a well documented review paper, composed in 1979, has surveyed second language acquisition research. Her survey contains a useful section on Age and Second Language Acquisition. This survey shows that the "strong version of the critical period theory" has become more and more eroded. Like Brown and Krashen she recognizes that there are different factors that enter into language learning, and once again she refers to cognitive, affective and neurological factors. She also shows that different aspects of language (pronunciation, morphology, or syntax) are mastered differently by different age groups, and on the basis of her own investigations as well as those by Ervin-Tripp, Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, she concludes that "learners excel at different aspects of second language learning at different ages" (187). She concludes:

> "These empirical studies probably lend more support to the notion that different aspects of language are best learned at different ages for a number of reasons: biological, cognitive, affective, and social. They do not, however, seem to support a strong version of the critical period theory for language learning" (187).

Brown, 1980:41-64, in a first-rate chapter compares and contrasts first and second language acquisition. This chapter is helpful to an understanding of the issues involved in interpreting language learning at different ages. What this chapter makes particularly clear is that the characteristics we are looking for may in fact be of four different kinds or 'domains': the physical domain (the neurological evidence), the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and the linguistic domain. In the physical domain, Brown--like Krashen--reports that "researchers are less hopeful of finding evidence (for adult-child language learning differences) in the neurological field" (48). However, he recognizes that children after the age of 5 have a certain neuromuscular plasticity which may give them a "physical advantage in the acquisition of the phonology of a

second language", but he hastens to add that it is important to remember "that pronunciation of a language is not by any means the sole criterion for acquisition, nor is it really the most important one" (49).

In the cognitive domain, he sees certain distinctions between child and adult learners which can--as Krashen has also done--be interpreted in Piagetian terms. The lack of formal operations and indeed the absence of awareness may work out to the advantage of a young learner in acquiring a language unselfconsciously.

Brown attributes particular importance to the affective domain and notes that the permeability of the 'language ego' is much greater in childhood than in the adult stage. For a child the issue of a 'second identity' which a second language imposes on every learner to a certain extent is less serious than for an older learner. Finally peer pressure works more on children than adults.

In the linguistic domain Brown refers particularly to those studies that have recognized similarities in second language learning by children and adults and first language acquisition.

Comments: Throughout Brown's account there is a clear recognition that many of these conceptualizations of the characteristics of children as language learners and the differences between children and adults are interesting hypotheses or suggestions rather than well established facts on which to base firm administrative action. Perhaps an outstanding fact of Brown's account is the multidimensionality of second language learning in childhood (as it is in adulthood), and that it must be looked at neurologically, cognitively, affectively and linguistically.

Cummins, 1981. This paper bears only to a limited extent on the interests of this project. It presents a re-analysis of data in a report by Ramsey and Wright on students of a non-Canadian origin. The Ramsey-Wright report could be interpreted to show that younger learners are better language learners. But the re-analysis by Cummins provides evidence that, if length of residence in Canada is included in the analysis, it would not support the view of the superiority of younger learners. Rather it would go to show that "older learners acquire cognitive/academic L2 skills more rapidly than younger learners" (147). The study further makes clear that to approach the competence in English of native speakers immigrant children need a longer than two-year period, i.e. approximately five years, to be treated and assessed on a par with English speaking children. This observation has some implications for the amount of time needed in L2 learning in general, if one considers that immigrants who, during the school-day operate entirely in an English-speaking environment, need such a long period of linguistic adjustment. While the Cummins study not only adds to Ramsey and Wright's concept 'age-on-arrival' the concept of 'length-of-residence', Cummins further distinguishes between a more academic aspect of language proficiency, CALP, and a more social-interpersonal one, BICS, lending further support to the idea of a more differentiated approach to language proficiency than had been customary in the past.

Comment: This study should be read in conjunction with Krashen et al (1979) and Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978), because the elements that are now being considered in language acquisition and language proficiency besides age are quite complex. Note the final comment by Cummins: "A complex array of social, educational, affective and cognitive factors determine L2 acquisition by immigrant children and differences in these factors and their interaction will be reflected in differences in patterns of L2 acquisition" (148).

Krashen, 1981: ch. 6, 70-82, reviews the "research and speculation on the neurological correlates of language acquisition". He examines the evidence for cerebral dominance in relation to language acquisition and concludes:

> "Lenneberg's claim that lateralization was complete by puberty and is the neurological basis for the critical period for language acquisition and thus responsible for child-adult differences in second language acquisition is not entirely ruled out. There is, however, considerable evidence today that implies that much of the development of cerebral dominance may be completed much earlier and may have little or nothing to do with the critical period" (77).

He concludes that the current scene in neurolinguistics is "somewhat unsettled":

> "While child-adult differences in second language acquisition potential do exist, the evidence for a biological barrier to successful adult acquisition is lacking. On the contrary, there is abundant reason to maintain that adults are still able to 'acquire' language naturally to a great extent" (81).

In this book he elaborates the Monitor Theory, and develops the distinction between language acquisition and language learning. He puts forward a Piagetian analogue in that learning develops with the period of formal operations so that the preferred way for children is one of language acquisition. However, he hastens to add that acquisition processes are still available to the adult as well (76-7).

Comment: Krashen's theoretical discussions are interesting for an interpretation of second language learning in children and adults; but his theory does not point either in the direction of child or adult language learning. If anything, it would suggest that children, in his terms, are certainly 'acquirers' of language and therefore in a very good position to 'acquire' a second language. However, his review of the neurological evidence suggests that there are no compelling reasons on neurological grounds to place languages at any particular stage into an educational program. His main assertion--equally applicable to adults and children--is that any teaching in order to stimulate acquisition processes should "emphasize meaningful and communicative activities" (81).

2. THE TIME FACTOR

Trends of development

On the time factor there has been a certain shift in research opinion during the last few years, particularly between about 1979-81. Around 1975-6 the viewpoint that had crystallized out of three major research sources was that the time allowed for language learning was in essence the primary factor to give greatest weight to if one wanted to be able to guarantee second language learning success on a large scale by whole school populations. This was the view expressed in 1974 by Burstall et al in the NFER report in Britain on the British Primary French Pilot Scheme. It was further confirmed in 1975 by Carroll in the international IEA study on French in eight countries, reinforcing a view that Carroll had previously expressed on several occasions as a result of earlier studies. In 1976 the Ottawa Evaluation Project, particularly so in the overview and synthesis report prepared by an OISE team (*Stern et al, 1976), again confirmed the importance of the amount of time as a key factor because it demonstrated very clearly that each major increase in time, represented by the three approaches to French, i.e. core, extended and immersion, was reflected in a noticeable increase in proficiency.

Here are three representative illustrations:

> Burstall et al (1974) couples time and age; citing Carroll, the report argues "that one of the most important variables in the learning process is the total amount of time spent actively in the learning situation" (122); Burstall concludes: "the achievement of skill in a foreign language is primarily a function of the amount of time spent studying that language, but is also affected by the age of the learner, older learners tending to be more efficient than younger ones" (123).

Carroll (1975): "The data of the present study suggest that the primary factor in the attainment of proficiency in French (and presumably, any foreign language) is the amount of instructional time provided. The study provides no clear evidence that there is any special advantage in starting the study of a foreign language very early other than the fact that this may provide the student more time to attain a desired performance level at a given age. In fact, the data suggest that students who start the study of a foreign language at relatively older ages make somewhat faster progress than those who start early. The recommendation that emerges is that the start of foreign language instruction be placed only so early as to permit students to have the amount of instructional time they need to achieve whatever level of competence is regarded as desirable by a given stage of their education. If necessary, the start of instruction can be delayed more than normally if more intensive instruction is given" (276-7).

Ottawa Evaluation Study: "On the question of time, the main finding is that the more time that is made available, the more learning is likely to occur. This result confirms other recent studies which have attributed importance to the time allotment for language learning. On the other hand the Project also suggests that time is not everything; other factors--such as the effective use of time, the organization of the program, and adequate curriculum planning and preparation--are also important" (Stern et al, 1976:125).

The Ontario Ministry of Education responded to these findings by tying its grant structure for French to the provision of appropriate time allocations rather than to age or a specific pattern of the French curriculum. As a result, the total amount of time for French, expressed as "accumulated hours" became the administrative currency for French as a second language in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1977).

As we have already seen from the quotations, no one was so naive as to believe that it was just time that was needed. The Ministry of Education no less than the researchers recognized that "there are many factors which contribute to the effectiveness of French instructional programs. The quality of teaching and the curriculum, for example, are of paramount importance" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1977:8). Steps were taken to deal with these; but administratively, the number of hours of instruction was considered the key factor.

A shift of viewpoint is reflected in recent studies cited in the documentation (*Swain 1981, *1981a, *Cummins in press, and *Stern in press). These studies attempt to understand better the interaction between time and the other factors that have bearing on language proficiency. Since the time factor has played such an important role in Ontario education, it is not surprising to find that particularly researchers at the OISE Modern Language Centre have tried to puzzle out the interaction between time and other factors and to sort out some apparent anomalies that have come to their notice.

The anomalies that concern the researchers are such questions as these: If instructional time is important for a second language, how is it that instructional time is NOT important for mother tongue teaching in the case of French immersion students who have only little or no time set aside for English? Again, if time is so important for second language learning, does it not follow that minority language learners should spend more time on English as a second language and not "waste" their time on mothertongue maintenance? *Cummins (in press) and *Swain (1981) deal with these questions in a helpful way.

To add to the list of anomalies on the time issue we must take note of a new development which is being examined at present in Europe under the aegis of the Fédération internationale des professeurs de langues vivantes (FIPLV). This is the notion of compact language courses. Just as we are getting ourselves geared up for teaching French over periods of 8 to 12 or 13 years, we find European language teachers complaining about language courses being too long, and therefore aimless and diffuse. Compact courses are envisaged as being more concentrated, with more clearly defined objectives, offered over a more limited time span, and self-contained. What the advocates of this notion hope to achieve is more efficient language teaching, leading to multilingual language education through greater concentration of purpose and timing in foreign language instruction.

What is the upshot?

1. There are two aspects of time which have to be borne in mind. One is the total amount of instructional time, the "accumulated hours", the other is the distribution of time.

2. Now that, thanks to research, there has been some appreciation of realistic estimates of total amounts of time needed for language learning, it is important to hold on to this. Too often in the history of second language teaching inadequate amounts of time have been set aside. The recognition of realistic time estimates represented, for example, by the Ministry's 1977 document, is a valuable step forward. It was a brilliant move on the part of the Ontario Ministry of Education to have turned total time estimates for French as a second language into an administratively practical measure.

3. Besides total time, another important aspect to bear in mind is the distribution (or intensity) of the total teaching time available. It can be concentrated or spread out. In Britain language educators have contrasted "drip-feed" (spread out) and "full flow" (concentrated/intensive), with some educators (e.g. Hawkins, 1981) strongly favouring a more concentrated format at the secondary level.

4. Time cannot be considered in isolation. It must be related to other factors: age, stage of proficiency, the language in question, and language pedagogy.

5. It is clear that age has bearing on total time needed. Older students may need less learning time, but younger ones may have more time to give to language learning.

6. Age has also bearing on distribution of time. Intensive language learning may be more effective when learners are older. Intensive language pro-

grams, e.g. compact courses, are therefore likely to be more suitable for older learners.

7. Stage of proficiency also has bearing on distribution of time. More experienced and more advanced language learners can probably benefit more from a concentrated approach than beginners and less experienced learners.

8. There is also a relationship between total time and the language taught. If a language is difficult to learn more time is needed (*Stern, in press). There are other aspects besides degree of difficulty that enter into the relationship between language and time. If the language is the language of the school or neighbourhood (e.g. English in Toronto) less instructional time may be needed than if the language is generally not used within the immediate environment (e.g. French in Toronto). (See *Cummins, in press; or *Swain, 1981).

9. Total time as well as distribution of time are in a reciprocal relationship with pedagogy. Time can (and should) influence pedagogy: with more time the curriculum can be strengthened and diversified. But the teaching approach and the curriculum can also determine the total time needed as well as the distribution of time, i.e. what mixture of spread or concentration yields the best results.

In short, in deciding on the time for French as a second language we must take into consideration the students (age, maturity, language learning experience), the sociocultural context (majority language/minority language; language with or without environmental support); and the available pedagogy.

The Time Factor: Documentation

Stern et al, 1976. This report is an overview and synthesis of a number of studies undertaken in Ottawa and Carleton between 1973-75. It deals with core French, extended French and French immersion. Among the questions to which this project paid particular attention is the time aspect, both the total amount of time as well as the question of time distribution. Chapter 5 which deals with core French considers in detail the research on time allocation and the relationship between the amount of instruction and achievement in French in a core program. Its main findings are:

> "Where the researchers compared 20-minute, 30-minute, and 40-minute programs at the same grade level, they found that students exposed to the longer periods of French scored higher on French language proficiency tests" (p. 45).

But the report qualifies this generalization and points out on the basis of some of the findings in these studies that "an increase in teaching time does not automatically produce better test results" (45) and it concludes that "the amount of teaching time alone cannot account for or predict a particular proficiency level" (46).

The report particularly looked into the merits of particular time variations in the core program from 20 to 40 minutes. It indicated that

> "the different time variations within the core programs have not led to any outstanding differences in language performance. On the basis of the French proficiency test scores alone, it is not possible to point to any particular variant as the one that should be discarded or to any other variant of the core program as the best or only valid one for adoption in the Ottawa-Carleton region" (48).

The student attitudes which were also investigated did not show any substantial relationship to the variation in teaching time within the core program.

It was above all teachers' views on the 20-minute core program that led to a demand for an extension. The teachers' arguments against the 20-minute core program were summarized and are reproduced at the end of this section. They led

to the conclusion that "in the view of many teachers and principals, the 20-minute core program is inadequate and should be extended" (54).

The following concluding statements on the time issue summarize the view of this report:

> "Given roughly comparable conditions, the more teaching time is made available in the French core program, the more learning is likely to occur." But on the basis of this project "no specific daily or yearly dosage can be recommended as the optimal for a core program" (57).
>
> "On the question of time, the main finding is that the more time is made available the more learning is likely to occur. This result confirms other recent studies which have attributed importance to the time allotment for language learning. On the other hand, the Project also suggests that time is not everything; other factors--such as the effective use of time, the organization of the program, and adequate curriculum planning and preparation--are also important" (125).

Swain, 1981. This paper deals in a thoughtful and searching way with a number of contradictions and anomalies concerning early and late immersion, majority and minority language learners, and time and age for language learning. The writer sets out from two assumptions which have been widely held as a result of research available up to about 1976 but which have been increasingly called into question: one assumption is that the more instructional time is given to French the higher the proficiency, and the other is that early immersion is more successful than late immersion. However, it appears from some recent studies that older immersion students need less time to reach comparable levels of proficiency than younger students.

The paper then turns to minority language learners, e.g. immigrants learning English as a second language. There the finding is that if immigrants are taught more and more through their mothertongue, that is to say, have relatively less instruction in the second language this has no deleterious effect on their skill in English, while in the case of majority language children in immersion

programs it seems to be unnecessary to spend any time on their mother tongue.

How can this anomaly be explained? The study uses two sets of concepts: the distinction between the academic aspect of language learning (CALP) versus the interpersonal-communicative aspect (BICS) and the distinction of language which receives environmental support and a language that does not. In the case of the majority language child the first language (i.e. English) is spoken in the environment and can take care of itself (at least up to a point). In the case of the minority language child it is English as a second language which can be taken for granted for the development of communicative skills whereas attention to the mother tongue in a school setting brings benefits "in terms of cognitive/academic development". The study therefore suggests that the time needed for instruction depends on timing, i.e. the age of the learner, as well as the place of the first and second language within the environment in which the language is learnt.

Comment: This study clearly shows how the question of time for language learning is bound up with the age issue as well as the minority/majority language issue. We should not expect that simply adding minutes of instructional time will automatically in all cases lead to measurable improvements.

Swain, 1981a. Another paper in which the writer deals with the question of time, in this case in relation to the expectations that go with different types of programs and the amount of time allocated to them. Setting out once more from the general principle that "the greater the number of hours of exposure to the second language, the higher the proficiency scores tend to be" (488). Swain then considers certain qualifications to this principle, one being age, another intensity of instruction, and the third teaching strategies. Examples of programs with different distribution of the same total number of accumulated hours

suggest that greater intensity at a later stage (e.g. a two-year late-immersion) can compensate for a smaller number of accumulated hours or intensity at an earlier age.

Another interesting illustration of the relationship of time to expected achievement are those indicated in the document of the Ontario Ministry of Education (1977). In that document certain achievements are suggested after given hours of instruction, 1200, 2100, or 5000. Thus the Ministry document suggested that after 2100 hours the student is expected to "understand the radio". Putting this to the test in one study it was found that immersion students after approximately 4300 hours were able to score on a test of comprehension of radio talk (weather forecast, newscast, advertisement, interview) rather like native speakers, but students who had only 2100 hours had a much lower score. Swain suggests that "either the statement 'understanding the radio' needs to be refined, or the expectation that this is achievable through 2100 hours of FSL instruction needs to be changed, or experimentation is needed to find out whether through changes in teaching methodology this goal could be reached in 2100 hours" (491). She summarizes her findings on this issue as follows:

> "although accumulated hours of second language instruction and proficiency in that language tend to be positively related, other factors such as the intensity of the second language program, the teachers, the methodologies adopted, and the age of the learner play a crucial role in affecting this relationship" (497).

Cummins, in press. In this paper on immersion Cummins sets out from the assumption "that accumulated hours of L2 instruction is one of the most critical factors in L2 achievement" (7). This view which was supported by Carroll in the IEA French study and by results comparing partial and full immersion, had to be modified as a result of partial immersion studies of the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Boards in which it was found that the proficiency of students in

partial French immersion was almost equivalent to that of their peers in total immersion. From this and another study Cummins is led to the conclusion that:

> "the direct relationship assumed between amount of L2 instructional time and achievement in L2 requires qualification. Although large differences in school exposure to L2 tend to result in differential achievement, differences in achievement are not always proportional to differences in accumulated hours. Other factors also play an important role in determining rate of L2 progress. For example, the extent to which L2 is taught as a subject or used as a medium of instruction, the quality of the curriculum, and the age of the learners are all capable of modifying the effects of accumulated hours. Thus, because of the influence of these, and possibly other factors, relatively small differences in exposure to L2 are unlikely to exert reliable effects on achievements" (8-9).

That there is no simple direct relationship between instructional time and achievement is further borne out by immersion students who have no or little instruction in English at least for a time, and yet suffer no disadvantage in their long-term development of English academic skills.

Stern, in press. This paper was written as a contribution to a discussion on the notion of a compact course, a concept recently examined by an international symposium, held at the University of Marburg, West Germany, under the auspices of the Fédération internationale des professeurs de langues vivantes (FIPLV). A compact course is defined as having specific short-term objectives, a clearly defined time-span and as self-contained within a broader scheme of language education. The symposium recommended the compact course format as a flexible system "which would permit and encourage the achievement and recognition of useful levels of proficiency in a number of languages". The symposium saw the compact course as a useful device for fostering multilingualism in secondary education.

The paper attempts to relate the notion of the compact course with its implication of reduced time and a more concentrated course format to recent and current thought on the time question in general. It attempts to resolve the apparent anomaly between demands for longer study and more time and the suggestion

that a reduction of time and greater concentration can lead to greater efficiency in language learning.

After examining different examples of various course formats and reviewing some of the research on the time factor in relation to age, aptitude and the course curriculum, it concludes:

> "There is obviously no justification for language courses which are overextended, poorly designed, badly articulated, and repetitive, and which consequently are frustrating and ineffective. The concept of compact course has undoubtedly considerable potential to remedy such weak and straggling language programs. It may also provide for a more flexible, and more varied approach to a multilingual education within a school context".

But the paper also warns against making facile claims for the effectiveness of compact courses without having examined examples and having tested the efficacy of this innovation empirically.

Summary of arguments against the 20-minute core program (Stern et al, 1976, p. 53):

1. It does not allow enough teaching time because part of the period is taken up with moving from class to class.

   This was reported by over one third of the teachers.

2. It does not give the French teacher sufficient opportunity to attend to students individually and to provide remedial help to students with learning difficulties.

3. The rapid class changes, and teaching at widely differing grade levels at such short intervals taxes--and often overtaxes--the skill and ingenuity of the teacher.

   About one third of them are teaching at six or more grade levels, and the average number of classes taught per day is eight; 81% of principals regard the sheer number of students a French teacher sees per day as disadvantageous.

4. The short French lesson, which stands apart from the rest of the curriculum, is difficult to integrate in content and method with other school activities.

According to 42% of principals, administrative problems with core French are greater than with other subjects; 59% of French teachers do not have a classroom of their own which makes teaching more difficult.

5. Because of the unusual teaching conditions, the French teacher often feels set apart--an isolated outsider among the staff.

6. French teachers and classroom teachers agree that discipline is a problem in the 20-minute French period.

3. FRENCH FOR THE MINORITY LANGUAGE CHILD

The problem

The third issue that presents itself as a problem for the Board is the question of when to introduce French in schools with large groups of ethno-linguistic minority children. There are several aspects to this problem.

Under the regulations of the Ontario Ministry of Education, French as a second language is to start at the same grade level throughout the area of a given school board. This could be grade 1, 2, 3 or 4 or whichever other grade a board decides to select. If it is grade 3 or 4, the board is likely to be pressed in some areas, for example, by parents' groups, to start French earlier, say, in grade 1 or 2.

If, then, the board in question gives way to these pressures and introduces French in grade 1, this would have to be applied in all schools in accordance with the principle of a uniform start throughout the board. The question then arises whether this is appropriate in all areas, even those which have large language minority populations. Would it not be sounder in these areas to start French in grades 3 or 4 so as to make it possible for minority children to concentrate on ESL in the first two or three years? If the minority language children were treated on a par with anglophone children, could they be expected to cope with French even though French, in their case, is a third language? And could this not hamper their progress in ESL?

In other words, what place should French as a second language have in the case of students whose home language is not English? If they are taught French like anglophone children this may be educationally unsound because their command of English is not yet adequate to cope with English-mediated school subjects. If

they are treated differently from other children in the board's area, that is if they are not taught French, the authorities may be open to the charge (a) of disregarding a ruling of the Ministry and (b) of discriminating against minority language children.

Schools are expected to develop the children's command of English and to foster their home language through Heritage Language Programs. Should they simultaneously offer French as a second language?

Experience and research

Although on a world scale the question of learning two foreign languages or of bilinguals acquiring a third language is not uncommon, research on this question is meagre.

As a practical issue in schooling the phasing-in of more than one foreign language often arises, particularly in secondary education. It is customary not to start two foreign languages simultaneously. The time lag between the introduction of one and then another language has been more a matter of common-sense experience than theoretically founded research. In secondary education it is not uncommon to allow a period of one year and often two before introducing another language.

Several years ago, the American psychologist J.B. Carroll (1967) recognized this question as a research issue when he wrote:

> Is it better to introduce two L2's simultaneously, or is it better to introduce them successively? This question has to be considered for various stages of development of the child. For example, it might be found that simultaneous introduction is feasible for early ages but not for later ages...It might be possible to conduct experiments in schools, comparing simultaneous and successive introduction of foreign languages.

Since research has in fact not taken up this question directly, we have to fall back on related studies to guide us. There are a few case studies which refer to children of various ages who have been exposed to two or three foreign

languages. For example, *Oksaar (1978) has studied the learning of German by a four-year-old who was a Swedish-Estonian bilingual. *Chamot (1978) has examined the acquisition of English as a third language by a ten-year-old French-Spanish bilingual boy. These children who acquired their third language without formal instruction not unexpectedly drew on their previous experience in their other two languages which contributed to their facility (mainly Oksaar's conclusion) as much as it also interfered (mainly Chamot's conclusion). It confirms in these cases that a learner brings to bear his whole previous experience on a new situation. Similar observations were made by *LoCoco (1976) in a German-Spanish bilingual school with regard to English. Some errors that students made in written composition could be traced back to their two previous languages but not nearly all. "Although previous language experience has been known to cause interference, the learning of a foreign language is possibly also furthered by such experience" (49).

Interesting observations were made by Lewis (1974) on Jamaican adolescent students who spoke Jamaican Creole and had learnt Standard Jamaican English in school and later were taught Spanish. The error patterns in Spanish of these students could be accounted for by their second language, English. If they had more relied on their knowledge of Creole, which was however tabooed in school, they could have transferred some structures directly to Spanish without making the typically English-induced errors. The lesson that one can derive from these studies is that a learner of a third language has a wider range of language experience to fall back upon and education should mobilize and encourage that experience rather than suppress it.

Some clues are perhaps also offered by studies on French immersion involving minority language children. Such studies were reviewed by *Genesee (1976) and *Cummins (in press). These immersion studies are unfortunately not very con-

clusive because of small numbers of studies and problems in research design. Nevertheless, both researchers were led to the conclusion that "there is nothing in these data to suggest that French immersion would not be suitable for third language children" (Genesee, 1976:510); or as Cummins put it: "the available data provide no evidence that French immersion programs are inappropriate for children from third language background" (in press:17). Both researchers point out the need for further research on this question. But from the point of view of this report the limited data available suggest that minority language children can cope with a demanding French program without suffering any major difficulties in English. Genesee (1976:510) notes specifically that "the finding that the third language children scored as well as they did on some of the English tests is remarkable considering their lack of formal instruction in English".

A further clue is offered by an example of trilingual education in Montreal which has been followed by a McGill team (e.g. *Genesee et al, 1978). From the point of view of this report, the example of double immersion (French and Hebrew) in this study is not so important as the fact that the control group which offered a non-immersion program involving Hebrew and enriched core French managed to compare quite favourably with an immersion program, even in French. This study certainly illustrates the feasibility of two 'mixes' of trilingual education.

As was said at the beginning of this section, none of these studies directly apply to core French in inner city schools or for minority language children. They merely demonstrate various experiences in trilingual education. They suggest that one should safeguard against prejudging the minority language issue. It is tempting to assert that "immigrants who can't even talk English" should not be "burdened" with and "confused by" another language. It may well be that for immigrant children French has a different status from English. Their imperfect knowledge of English distinguishes immigrants from anglophones. In French, however, they are equal. Often the experience of bilingualism may give the immigrant a welcome ad-

vantage over the native-born in learning French. Therefore it should not be regarded a priori as negative for the minority child to be exposed to what to him is a third language, at whatever stage it is planned to be introduced into the program.

In a recent small handbook on bilingualism and the minority child, Cummins (1981) who makes a very convincing case for a positive approach to bilingual education, specifically mentions the third language issue. Whatever evidence is available is once more reviewed there with the implication not to fear the third language.

On the basis of the limited data we have one can recommend that the teaching of French as a third language to language minority children can be approached without apprehension and in a positive frame of mind. The Cummins handbook very appropriately shows why the immediate reaction of some teachers, parents, and principals to bilingualism and even more to trilingualism has been one of suspicion.

Quite independently of the arguments presented by Cummins, a similarly positive case to that of the Cummins handbook was made, ten years ago, by myself in a report to the Gendron Commission in Quebec recommending to the Commission to offer trilingual education to ethnolinguistic minorities in Quebec to meet their aspirations within a French-speaking context to learn French as the language of the Province, and English as the majority language of North America while at the same time maintaining their ancestral language (*Stern,1973). It should be noted that, in outlining three patterns of trilingual education, the study suggested a gradual phasing-in of different languages and provided a rationale for each pattern. However, research and evaluation was recommended throughout the report.

Finally, it is interesting to note that at a recent visit to Toronto a Scandinavian expert on minority language education, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, who is a strong advocate of bilingual education, reported--almost as a matter of course--

that in Swedish comprehensive schools which introduce universally English as a foreign language in grade 3, for ethnic minorities English is delayed for one or two years in order not to expose them to two languages (i.e. Swedish and English) in too close succession.

Conclusion

The general conclusion that can be drawn from the available literature on multilingualism in young children is that the task of teaching French as a second language to minority language children can be approached confidently as an opportunity rather than as a problem, on the grounds that the minority child can bring bilingual experience to bear on the third language.

The teaching of French to such children should not be treated as if it were the same as teaching French to unilingual anglophone children. Keeping the special advantages and language problems of minority language children in mind it may be useful to gain experience in pilot classes and to approach the teaching of French to minority groups with the intention of helping them, through the teaching of French, to advance their general language education. This could be done by drawing together their native language background, their acquisition of English and the approach to French.

As a footnote to this suggestion it is interesting to note that a more positive view of multilingual experience is being taken today by educators and researchers in multilingual societies. It is no accident that a forthcoming conference in Singapore, organized by SEAMEO (the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization), will deal with this issue. The theme of the seminar is "interlanguage transfer processes in language learning and communication in multilingual societies". In this situation, which is of course, to a lesser extent also the situation in Canada and certainly in Toronto, one should envisage forms of language education in which the different languages support each other rather than suppress them because

of fear of "confusion" or "interference". This fear is often a reflection of an ideology which considers unilingualism as normal, and bi- or multilingualism as worrying and dangerous rather than as normal and indeed as enriching to a society, school system, or the individual student.

French for the Minority Language Child: Documentation

(Notes arranged in chronological order)

Stern, 1973. This is a report prepared at the request of the Gendron Commission in Quebec on the question of bilingual education with particular reference to minority children in Quebec. The question the Gendron Commission was interested in was whether bilingual education offered the possibility of reconciling the interest of the Commission in the maintenance of French with the interest on the part of the ethnic minorities to maintain their own languages and at the same time to learn English. The report is based on a review of the relevant documentation submitted to the Gendron Commission as well as on an analysis of writings and reports concerned with bilingual schooling, as they were available ten years ago. The study constitutes therefore a state-of-the-art report on bilingual education and applies the ideas to ethnic minorities. It expresses itself positively on the possibility of trilingual schooling so that the children in question would (1) learn French, (2) learn English, and (3) maintain or develop their own language. Particularly relevant for the question of ethnic minorities in Toronto learning English would be chapter 6 of the report: French-English Bilingual Education for Ethnic Minorities. This chapter shows that the witnesses from the ethnic communities in Quebec "opt for French-English bilingual schools and the maintenance of native languages" (73). The views of the ethnic minorities in Quebec at that time were summarized as follows:

> "French-English bilingual education for ethnic minorities means of course an education in two second languages. If we add to that the maintenance of the mother tongue as a further task of education we are facing trilingual education. For the monolingual such a profusion of languages would seem awesome, even preposterous. But for many members of ethnic groups who originate from a multilingual background (e.g., Eastern Europe), the thought of bilingual education is not frightening. Many persons of other than British or French origin in Quebec, particularly in Montreal, are already bilingual. Therefore the school would merely extend and develop skills that many parents have acquired to a certain extent through normal life experiences" (80).

The report outlines three patterns of trilingual schooling. While these are not directly applicable to core French in the primary grades, they suggest possible approaches to multilingual schooling in the primary and junior grades.

Bouton, 1975. This paper describes how an Illinois elementary school has attempted to meet the needs of children with diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. The school carried into effect a multilingual and multicultural policy. Children from different language and ethnic background were given the opportunity to learn or improve English, and at the same time to have some instruction in their own native language. English-speaking children were given the chance of learning a foreign language in association with native speakers of that language. Bilingual children had the opportunity to learn a third language. The program brought into the open cultural features from different parts of the world in the expectation that this would enhance the self-image of all children and give the school program an international character. The expectation was that through such a program children would become more knowledgeable about cultures and languages and more tolerant and accepting of these.

The article does not speak directly to the issue faced by the Board in inner city schools in Toronto. However, what it does demonstrate very clearly and that makes it relevant, is that what initially appeared as a 'problem', i.e. children with different language and cultural backgrounds in one school, was turned by the school into an educationally interesting opportunity where all children benefited linguistically, socioculturally, and in knowledge about different countries. It is from this perspective that this case study is interesting.

Genesee, 1976. In this review of immersion research, presented in 1975, Genesee dealt with the empirical knowledge that had been acquired by that time on the question of suitability of French immersion for various groups of students, i.e.

children of low intelligence and low academic ability, children with language and learning disabilities, children from working class homes, and also children from minority groups. His main source on third language minorities was a study by Edwards and Casserly in Ottawa which, as part of the long-term evaluation of extended and immersion programs in the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board, had paid particular attention to third language families. Genesee interprets the findings cautiously but concludes:

> "the findings that the third language children scored as well as they did on some of the English tests is remarkable considering their lack of formal instruction in English. At the same time their French language skills were comparable to the English-based group's, despite differences in social class background. ...there is nothing in these data to suggest that French immersion would not be suitable for third language children" (510).

However, he sums up the whole section, which deals with various other minority studies not related to the trilingual issue, in a guarded fashion and describes the whole research in this field as inconclusive and in need of "well-controlled longitudinal study of the effectiveness of French immersion for third language or minority group of children" (510).

LoCoco, 1976. This study was carried out at a college in Mexico City which provides a partial late immersion program in German. Consequently the students in this college can be considered Spanish-German bilinguals. In the investigation their learning of English was studied. The error patterns of English compositions of some 180 students ranging in age from 10;11 (grade 6) to 19;8 (grade 13) were investigated in order to find out the development of the new language in relation to the two other languages already known by the students. The overall conclusion was that "intralingual errors exceeded interlingual errors at all grade levels" (58). Among the explanations offered for this phenomenon the author suggests:

> "Previous language experience also appears to be a factor which influences the occurrence of types of errors. Increased experience with languages seems to result in proportionately fewer interlingual errors in the learner's language. The more bilingual learner is possibly aware of the fact that reliance on one system may cause interference in the other system. He consequently relies less on the known languages, than the less bilingual learner. The less bilingual learner also tends to rely more on his stronger language, while in the more bilingual learner reliance appears to be more evenly distributed between L1 and L2" (59).

Comment: This study then suggests that acquiring more than one language makes learners more 'language-wise' and they begin to learn how to learn languages and therefore inhibit naive transfer of rules from language A or B to language C.

Genesee, Tucker and Lambert, 1978. This is the third report on a trilingual program in which the school day was divided between French immersion and Hebrew with English left to take care of itself as the home language. Two immersion schools with this type of program were compared with a non-immersion school with instruction of general curriculum subjects in English; this school had however besides its Hebrew program an enriched French program. The purpose of the enquiry was of course to find out how immersion in French and Hebrew compared with non-immersion. The findings hardly confirm the expected superiority of the immersion program. Above all, results in the two immersion schools were different among themselves, and the comparison with the control group was not nearly as favourable to immersion as comparisons between conventional immersion and regular programs have tended to be. Even on the French language tests on which one would expect superiority on the part of the immersion groups the results are by no means unambiguous. The study tends to downplay somewhat the lack of clear-cut advantages for the immersion program. But our concern here is not the relative merits of immersion versus non-immersion. What this study demonstrates in an interesting way is the possibility and the advantages of a trilingual education (with or without

immersion).

Oksaar, 1978. This paper describes the case of a bilingual preschool child who had been brought up with Estonian and Swedish and who, close to the age of four, was moved into a German-speaking environment where he added German to his linguistic repertoire. Observations were carried out from age 3;11 to 5;11. The study which illustrates code switching concludes:

> When the three languages he (Sven--the child observed) is using are L1 (Estonian), L2 (Swedish) and L3 (German), his repertoire is L_x. L_x contains elements and rules from L1, L2, and L3 as well as elements and rules typical only for L_x. These elements and rules are activated according to the requirements of the situation. In certain speech events L1 elements dominate, in others elements from L2 and L3 and in still others we notice the autonomous parts of L_x. The contact of languages gives the child an opportunity to choose the linguistic medium of expression. It also gives the child the possibility of creating what is appropriate for him in mastering the requirements of communicative acts.

Oksaar points out that a child in this situation develops an early awareness of two or more languages, of what is right in languages, and a rational approach to language. The observer was aware of the child making use of his previous language experience in acquiring L3.

Chamot, 1978. This is a case study of a ten-year old French-Spanish bilingual boy whose learning of English was observed by taping twice a month over a nine-months period the family dinner conversation for fifteen to thirty minutes at each session. The development of the errors was analyzed and assigned to developmental causes or interference, and in the case of interference either to Spanish or French. According to the editor of the volume "some readers may wish to quarrel with assigning a causal relationship to first language interference" (1976). In this study the investigator appears to interpret interference as a powerful impediment in learning a third language. In this respect, then, this study runs counter

to the views expressed elsewhere in the recent literature, namely to look upon transfer as an altogether positive rather than negative force, although the phenomenon of interference is not denied. It is just a question of how much weight to attribute to it. The study concludes with this assessment:

> "Although he had the advantage of living in an English speaking environment with many models for imitation, the language habits of French and Spanish made it difficult for him to master some aspects of the English grammatical system" (189).

Cummins, in press. In the context of a general review of French immersion and its impact on the cognitive and linguistic development of children, Cummins has considered the merits of immersion for children with a third language background. While this situation is not exactly the same as the place of core French in the education of minority children, Cummins' review of the issue and summary of available research in relation to immersion provides useful leads. This report is helpful as a source of references to related studies on trilingual education and the language learning of minority children. Cummins concludes:

> "In summary, the available data provide no evidence that French immersion programs are inappropriate for children from third language backgrounds. However, studies of this question have tended to be small-scale and few in number and the issues are by no means resolved" (17).

Cummins, 1981a. This well-argued and clearly written short handbook on the language education of minority language children is primarily concerned with the pros and cons of bilingual education for these children. Should the minority child be encouraged 'to forget' his home language? Should the school encourage an English only or a bilingual policy? The handbook argues very convincingly in favour of a bilingual policy. It encourages parents to maintain their home language, and schools to foster it as the child's "heritage language" and, at the same time, to teach

English as the language of the wider community. Both the theoretical bases for a bilingual policy as well as the currently available empirical research are explained for the benefit of parents and teachers, and the necessary documentation for this point of view is provided in notes.

The book is mainly of course concerned with the child's home language and English as his second language. It also deals with academic skills and conceptual development. Its primary interest is not the learning of a third language, i.e. French. However, on pages 24-25 on "Facilitation in Learning Additional Languages" deals with this issue. This question has been investigated in one or two previous Toronto studies to which this section refers which show that minority language children cope well with the additional language; in particular reference is made to Saif and Sheldon's observation in their 1969 report issued by the Research Department. The general tenor of the book implies that there is no justification for withholding instruction in French from minority language children.

Cummins cites the instances of Alberta families who combined two home languages, in one case English and Armenian with French immersion, and in another Ukrainian with English and German: "In all these cases the parents were confident that trilingualism was possible" (38) and took the necessary steps to stimulate and safeguard their children's language development.

Comment: Cummins argues convincingly against the older "common sense" view that the maintenance of the home language would confuse children or detract from their development in English. It is equally important not now to transfer this argument to the additional language. The advantage of French, as a third language for the minority child, is that it puts the minority child on an equal footing with regard to a language taught at school to which he can relate in the same way as his English-speaking peers, with the added advantage of two previous languages to fall back on.

4. PEDAGOGY: GOALS, METHODS AND MATERIALS

The current scene

Experience in the teaching of languages to younger children is internationally available over the whole range of pre-secondary education. Its characteristics and trends of development can be gauged from an examination of research studies, published programs, guides on teaching methods, or classroom observation, e.g. *Shapson and Kaufman (1978), *Doyé (1979), *Donoghue and Kunkle (1979), *Freudenstein (1979), *Ontario Ministry of Education (1980), *Quebec Ministry of Education (1980), *Rivers (1981), Hawkins (1981), Naiman et al (1978), *Stern and Weinrib (1977/1978).

Curricula for teaching French in the primary and junior grades were conceived in the 1960s and largely still reflect today the audiolingual emphasis of that period. From that time onwards, the main stress has been laid on the development of the audiolingual skills, i.e. listening comprehension and speaking. The introduction of reading and writing was and still is frequently delayed and treated as secondary in importance to the development of audiolingual skills. Language experiences are largely offered in dialogues and sometimes through narratives, both of which aim at the child's level of experience, through dramatizations, games, group activities, and singing (e.g. Braem 1977; Belanger 1981), and in situations which are commonly taken note of in school settings: e.g., birthdays, family events, Hallowe'en, Christmas, Easter, summer holidays, and so on. Frequently, songs, rhymes, appropriate to an occasion in school settings or, to a lesser extent, characteristic of child culture in France or Quebec are included. The main objective is one of language proficiency in practical terms with some

emphasis on linguistic knowledge, e.g., sound symbol relations, verb forms and paradigms, masculine and feminine, singular and plural. But grammatical concepts and terms are treated as subsidiary; they are regarded as more appropriate for intermediate and senior grades. Cultural knowledge, too, is not prominent and left implicit through songs and rhymes, occasional cooking recipes, units on the Quebec winter carnival and the like.

As a rough generalization it can be said that, during the period under review (1975-81), there has not been much visible progress or change in the area of pedagogy for younger children. Professional leaders, during this period, were less concerned with questions of pedagogy at this level of language instruction than with the more fundamental issue of the survival of early language teaching altogether.

In many countries, including Canada, this was largely due to the impact of the influential British report of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), *Primary French in the Balance (Burstall et al, 1974), described in Part 1 of the documentation to this section. The controversy it aroused during the period 1975 to 1980 and some of the criticisms of language pedagogy in the NFER Report itself have bearing on present-day thinking about the future of core French.

An additional and very important factor in Ontario, and indeed more generally across Canada, for the relative neglect of pedagogy in the core program during the period under consideration has been the pre-occupation with French immersion as the ultimate answer to most language teaching woes. The core program was mainly treated as a foil against which to show up the advantages of immersion. The possibilities and problems of the core program have tended to be neglected, or at least core French did not receive the attention it needed in order to overcome some of the problems it was up against.

A number of interesting and promising new developments in general language pedagogy have taken place over the last decade, e.g., the cognitive approach, individualization of instruction, and a whole range of ideas which are globally referred to as communicative language teaching. Particularly influential in this respect have been Wilkins' "notional syllabus" (1976) and the Council of Europe language project (e.g. Trim, 1980; and Trim et al, 1980). Most of these have hardly yet affected the pedagogy for younger children.

Typical of recent pedagogical thought for teaching languages to younger children are two publications, one European, *Freudenstein (1979), and the other American, *Donoghue and Kunkle (1979). Both can be regarded as useful publications containing helpful ideas and suggestions and showing that up to a point a practical language pedagogy is in place in the primary and junior grades. But neither work deals in any searching way with the controversies and questions that express the misgivings of language educators about teaching languages in the early grades nor are these publications much affected by recent innovations in pedagogy.

Among a few interesting publications on pedagogy, particularly relevant to teaching languages to younger children, mention should be made of two Canadian government documents because of their significance for early core French. One is the *Ontario Ministry of Education French Core Curriculum Guideline (1980) and the other a research document and programme d'études for French as a second language published by the *Quebec Ministry of Education (1980). Both these documents come to grips with certain important issues in early language teaching today.

The Ontario document emphasizes the need for continuity and coherence of a program wherever it is started. It identifies three sets of objectives, language skills, knowledge about language, and cultural understanding: "It is the aim of Core French programs to provide opportunities for students to develop communication skills in French, an understanding of how language functions, and a

sensitivity to culture and people" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1980:2). In other words a narrow proficiency objective alone is not enough. Moreover, these objectives are not left in the form of broad generalizations. They are described in detail and specified in terms of pedagogical activities, and a rationale is offered of what can be expected, stage by stage, in a long-term French core curriculum. The Guideline thus deals with some of the major deficiencies and criticisms of current core programs, lack of continuity and absence of a coherent and well designed program.

The curriculum, developed by the Quebec Ministry of Education, is interesting, too; but it demonstrates a different approach. The Quebec team has attempted to bring to bear on its second language programs in English and French, at the elementary and secondary levels, recent European thought on the language curriculum. In accordance with this, it has established the language "needs" of students at different grade levels through research studies and then has expressed the curriculum in terms of language functions to meet these needs. It has been decisively and, in my view, productively influenced by the Council of Europe Threshold Level syllabuses and related developments in Britain.

Both approaches represent attempts to give elementary level programs greater strength, coherence, and a more clearly defined rationale.

> For a review of other developments in language pedagogy at this level and further references see Stern and Weinrib (1977/78).

Issues in curriculum design for early core French programs

In conclusion to this section it may be useful to draw attention to a few major problems in curriculum design for core French. Regardless at what grade level the program begins, early core French has to face up to a number of issues which some of the studies we have considered in the documentation have revealed and which practical experience has confirmed. These issues arise from the fact

that an FSL program that begins in the primary grades and has a daily time allocation of 30 or 40 minutes is a long-term program. It may last 5, 8, or even 12 or 13 years, and it constitutes a substantial part of the school curriculum. Several consequences which arise from this characteristic of core French programs are increasingly recognized today:

(1) The first consequence is the problem of continuity. Whether the French program begins at K, grade 1, 2, 3, or 4, if it is to be effective it must be planned on a consecutive basis, and the elementary and secondary portion must be well coordinated. The lack of continuity and overall planning is one of the most frequently criticized features of core French programs. It is an aspect, as was pointed out above, which has been particularly emphasized in the Ontario Guideline. It is clear that the longer the planned program is designed to be the more important it is to pay attention to continuity.

(2) The second issue is the quality of educational content of core programs. Since the core program through its overall length and daily time allocation constitutes a substantial portion of the school curriculum, it must also make a substantial contribution to the educational purpose of the school curriculum. It cannot be justified on the grounds of a limited language skill training alone. The curriculum cannot be satisfactorily expressed purely in terms of graphie des sons, structure lists, lists of vocabulary items or lists of notions and functions. This does not mean to say that such lists are unimportant. On the contrary, they are essential; but they are not sufficient to sustain a program from the primary to the senior division. The Ontario Guideline recognizes this to a certain extent. It indicates, as was said above, a range of objectives (language skills, knowledge about language, and cultural understanding); but it does not go far enough, or its message may not be presented with sufficient emphasis. If the core program is to be a true alternative to immersion, and not merely a poor second best it must be

deliberately strengthened through its choice of non-trivial topics and themes, substantial cultural content, and educationally worthwhile student activities. There are indications that this is today more and more recognized (e.g. Waters, 1981; Dehaies and Hamers, 1981; Petry, 1981). A scheme outlined in 1980, not specifically with the core program in mind but applicable to second/foreign language programs in general, can give an idea of curriculum directions that could be further explored and adapted to core French programs (*Stern, in press, b).

(3) Related to the demand for substantial educational content in the core French program is a further issue: the question of integration of core French with the general school curriculum. French as a second language has been historically an "add-on", rather than an integral part of the school curriculum. Instead, the core program should be designed in such a way as to establish links between French and other language subjects (e.g. English, Language Arts, Heritage Language programs) as well as links to other relevant curriculum areas (e.g., music, art and social studies). Some school boards are aware of this and have taken steps to foster closer links of core French with other curriculum areas. Through such deliberate integration the core French program can support native language development and contribute to general language education. The French core program can thus become part of "language across the curriculum". Ideas of this kind have lately been made more concrete, although for different circumstances, by Roulet (1980) and Hawkins (1981). Integration would educationally reinforce natural tendencies of cognitive transfer to which Cummins, Swain and others have recently repeatedly drawn attention. Beyond language education, the French core program can also be linked with many other curriculum areas and activities with which it is associated, e.g., music, art, and social studies. In fact any school subject can of course contribute subject matter to the French core program. This is a lesson of the immersion experience that has not yet been adequately recognized and explored

for the benefit of core programs.

(4) In (2) and (3) above, emphasis was laid on the need to strengthen the French core curriculum by diversifying its educational content. A final consequence of creating long-term programs is that they should be longitudinally more differentiated than they customarily are. Admittedly, as we saw in (1), there should be continuity, but that does not mean monotony. As the program advances from the primary to the junior division and on to intermediate and senior, each level or stage should have its own characteristics leading the student to identifiable and attainable short-term objectives. There are a number of educational precedents for the importance of this in long-term programs. The concept of mastery learning in USA, the development of language learning levels in European and more recently in British language teaching, e.g. the Threshold Level/niveau seuil (see also Harding et al, 1980), and the recent idea of "compact courses" are helpful as warnings against long-term programs which are undifferentiated and too stretched out, and therefore insufficiently punctuated by clearly marked stages and short-term objectives to strive for at each stage of the program.

These four issues--continuity, educational quality, integration, and differentiation--are likely to play an increasingly important role in the future definition and design of core French programs beginning in the early grades. Unless steps are taken to strengthen core programs in some such way they are likely to remain a poor second best to immersion.

Pedagogy: Documentation

Part 1 of the following notes deals entirely with the Report of the National Foundation of Educational Research (Burstall et al, 1974) and reactions to that report because of the importance of the report itself and the reaction to it during the years 1975-80.

Part 2 contains a small selection of other notes on pedagogy and studies on early language learning published since 1975.

Part 1: Reactions to the NFER Report

Burstall et al, 1974. This was the final report of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) on the ten-year evaluation of French in British primary schools. This report became the subject of a lengthy controversy not only in Britain but in many countries including Canada and USA. Its importance for the future development of language teaching for younger children everywhere was immediately apparent.

While this report dealt with a number of issues in a searching and objective way, for example, language teaching in relation to socioeconomic and sex factors or the relation of language teaching to school size, its major conclusion on the teaching of languages to younger children was summarized in the concluding chapter. In the words of the much quoted final sentence of the report:

> "Now that the results of the evaluation are finally available... it is hard to resist the conclusion that the weight of the evidence has combined with the balance of opinion to tip the scales against a possible expansion of the teaching of French in primary schools.

But the entire conclusion is hard-hitting and negative about "primary French". Here are some of the questions which the research was supposed to answer and the corresponding responses:

1. Do other aspects of education and general intellectual development gain or suffer from the introduction of French teaching in the primary school?

   Answer: At the primary level neither profit nor loss. At the secondary level, more loss than profit.

2. Are there levels of ability below which the teaching of French is of dubious value?

   Answer: The results of the evaluation cannot really furnish an unequivocal answer to this question. But... unless there is a sustained effort to redefine the ob-

jectives of teaching French in order to meet the pupils' differing needs, some children will not realize their full potential, while others will inevitably experience failure. It is clear from the results of the evaluation that some children developed a sense of failure during their first year of French. For these children, learning French was a profitless experience.

3. Is any substantial gain in mastery achieved by beginning to learn French at the age of eight?

   Answer: This question can be answered unequivocally in the negative.

4. What methods, attitudes and incentives are most effective in promoting the learning of French?

   Answer: No single method is equally appropriate for all pupils. There are, however, certain aspects of learning French which children of all levels of achievement tend to reject, such as the enforced passivity, repetition and incomprehension associated with the use of the tape-recorder, and the practice of reading French aloud, which for most pupils acts as a source of embarrassment and a barrier to understanding. In the language learning context nothing succeeds like success.

5. What organizational and teaching problems are posed by the introduction of French teaching in the primary school?

   Answer: At the primary level, almost all organizational problems can be traced to the fact that not all class teachers are able to teach French to their own classes. At the secondary level, almost all organizational problems can be traced to the fact that most schools receive a mixed intake of pupils with varying degrees of previous contact with French teaching.

(Adapted from Burstall et al, 1974:241-245)

It is not necessary to describe the report in further detail. Summaries were published in Ontario through the Ministry of Education (Stern, Burstall and Harley, 1975), in the Canadian Modern Language Review (Burstall, 1975) and FL Annals (Burstall, 1977).

Comment: The general conclusion in the report's final sentence and the answers to question 1 and 3 have important policy implications and suggest that early teaching of a second language is not worthwhile and should be discontinued. The answers to questions 4 and 5 are more pedagogical and organizational and suggest possible lines of improvement in the provision of French teaching in the primary and junior division.

Open opposition to the report was expressed soon after its publication, at a meeting in York in 1975. At this meeting (which I attended) I gained the impression that the inspectors (HMI's)--probably in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science--for the sake of greater economy would have been quite pleased, on the basis of the Burstall Report, to 'bury' primary French but there was strong opposition to the extremely negative interpretation of the findings, implicit in the report. This opposition and a more positive interpretation of primary French and also of findings within the report found expression in the final resolutions to this meeting. See on this point the letter by *Spicer (1977) and the article by *Spicer in the Canadian Modern Language Review (1980).

Buckby, 1976. The critique of the report was expressed at the meeting in a very courageous manner by Michael Buckby who later published his criticisms in an article in the Modern Language Journal under the telling title: "Is primary French really in the balance?"

Buckby (1) contends that not all observers are convinced that the evidence quoted in the report supports the conclusion in its final sentence;

(2) questions the appropriateness of some of the tests on which the findings were based; and

(3) claims that there are important aspects of "Primary French" which the report does not evaluate and that should be taken into account.

His conclusion:

> "My own interpretation of the balance of opinion amongst language learners, teachers and advisers is that the work of the last ten years has shown quite convincingly that although the introduction of French into the primary school has not gone perfectly, and that there is no room for complacency, it is clearly a step in the right direction" (346).

Bennett, 1975. This critical notice in the British Journal of Educational Psychology questions aspects of the research design of the Burstall Report and also the final interpretation and concludes: "My interpretation of the results is that both the weight of the evidence and the balance of opinion favours the experimental group" (340).

Spicer, 1977; 1980. The author, professor of applied linguistics at the University of Essex, formerly the Director of the Nuffield Language Project, in more guarded language than Buckby has nonetheless also expressed his reservations about the Burstall Report. In connection with a set of American articles in Foreign Language Annals on the British project written by Burstall (1977) and Kunkle (1977) FL Annals published a letter by Professor Spicer which provides interesting background to the discussions on the Burstall Report.

> "You may be interested to hear that although it was the majority, but not unanimous, view of the organizers of the Conference (mainly H.M. Inspectors) that the case for primary French had not been substantiated, the overwhelming majority of those attending the conference (teachers, head teachers, language advisers, college and university lecturers, etc.) took a very different view and recommended that French should continue to be taught in the primary school" (259).

In an article in the Canadian Modern Language Review, Spicer (1980) placed the report in the wider context of early teaching of modern languages (ETML) in Britain and explained that ETML is not dead in Britain and was indeed "as flourishing as in other countries of Europe...".

Stern, Burstall and Harley, 1975. In 1975 the Ontario Ministry of Education and the OISE Modern Language Centre invited Dr. Burstall to come to Toronto and discuss her report. The sessions were recorded and transcribed. This publication presents a summary of the report by Dr. Burstall. It provides a useful introduction to the British project from a Canadian perspective through the questions and answers which are arranged according to topics. Dr. Burstall responds to questions on materials, program objectives, teachers, and the primary/secondary liaison. The research design and the findings of the project are also discussed. The study ends with an expression of views on the relevance of the British project for Ontario and the expression of views on the policy implications of the British study.

Nuffield Foundation, 1977. The Nuffield Foundation, a charitable British foundation, which had for many years taken much interest in curriculum development in Britain, and particularly in the language project, in 1976 formed a small committee of professional leaders in language teaching with the intention of reviewing the "early teaching of modern languages" in a broader perspective than had been done in the NFER report. While carefully trying to avoid involving themselves in a conflict with the NFER team by praising the "meticulous care" and expertise of the researchers, this Committee was evidently concerned about the one-sided view that had been presented by the NFER report. The Nuffield report set out to provide more context and thus to set the record straight and through its deliberations and a questionnaire enquiry provide a picture of early language teaching which was less uncompromising and would set out conditions for better future developments. While this report relates particularly to the British situation, it is couched in sufficiently general terms that some of its lessons are relevant to the improvement of Core French programs in Canadian elementary schools. The conditions

for success, outlined in section 3.20 of the report basically are indicated as good organization, careful planning and adequate support services--in other words, the report warns against treating early teaching of modern languages casually and thus inviting disappointments, ineffectiveness and ultimately failure.

Part 2: Other Recent Writings on Pedagogy

(alphabetically arranged)

Donoghue and Kunkle, 1979. In this American book written for FLES teachers and student teachers reasons for studying languages in the elementary curriculum are developed. The nature of language is characterised and psychological characteristics of children as language learners are outlined. Several chapters deal in a practical way with what the book calls "The FLES method". This method relies on dialogues and narratives. In another chapter the authors suggest approaches to reading and writing and to the cultural component. Additional chapters deal with ESL and bilingual education. In a restricted compass useful practical techniques are described. Donoghue and Kunkle provide a record of approaches that have been evolved and have commonly been used over the last 10 or 15 years. The book does not deal with any problematical issues of the kind raised in the Burstall Report. Questions of age or time are not specifically discussed, nor is there any mention of recent research on language learning or on the implications of current developments in communicative language teaching.

Doyé, 1980. This is a short account of a major research undertaken in Germany on the teaching of English to children in German primary school in lower Saxony. The study, which was made from 1970 to 1975 and published as a book in 1977 (Doye and Lüttge, 1977) is on a more restricted scale equivalent to the

British Pilot Scheme. But in contrast to the British research it was considered a successful study in that the superiority of the early starters was maintained over a control group which started English in the first year of the secondary school. It attributes the success of this experiment to three factors:

(a) qualified teachers,

(b) continuity between primary and secondary school,

(c) planned organization and methods suited to the ages of the children.

> "On the basis of these findings the research team has recommended a general introduction of English into the curriculum of primary schools in the Federal Republic of Germany" (33).

Freudenstein, 1979. This book which consists of different papers by writers who have been involved in teaching languages to younger children is the result of a Round Table held in Zurich in 1979, under the chairmanship of the editor, Reinhold Freudenstein on behalf of the Fédération des professeurs de langues vivantes (FIPLV). The intention of the book is to be of practical help and to introduce readers to the various questions that might be asked. The questions are in the preamble:

> Who is qualified to teach foreign languages? What are the benefits of an early start? Which textbooks and materials? etc.
>
> Here and there some of the now discredited old arguments reappear, e.g.
>
> "Young children should learn foreign languages at an early age because there is sufficient evidence, from research and personal experience, that they can achieve success unsurpassed by any other age group" (20).

The book does not deal with the questions that have been raised in recent years. The Burstall study is brushed aside (15).

Comment: Although this book can hardly be described as a 'gold mine' of ideas, it is nonetheless a sincere, useful and practical set of statements of enthusiastic teachers who speak from personal experience. While several authors rightly emphasize the importance of the teacher's personality and capacity to establish contact with young children, there is a tendency in some of the writings which has been so prevalent in early language teaching to believe that the teacher's personality is all that is needed. In an article by a French school inspector, Monique Pinthon, however, the balance of personal qualities and technical skill is well stated when she says that in a language teacher for younger children one should look for three qualities: love (of children), language (knowledge of the language to be taught) and teaching (technical skill). In spite of good qualities hardly a book which touches on the controversial issues of recent years.

Ontario Ministry of Education, 1980. The French Core Curriculum Guideline is not specifically concerned with elementary school French, but it comprises all divisions, primary, junior, and intermediate as well as senior. It conceptualizes Core French in ways which are essential for curriculum development at this level. It emphasizes continuity and coherence of the program from beginning to end wherever it is started. It specifies three starting points in the elementary school: grades 1, 4 or 7, besides a grade 9 start. But these starting points are only meant to be examples. A starting point at grades 2, 3, or 5 is not ruled out. But "once an instructional sequence has begun, the Core French program must continue uninterrupted to the final year in which French is offered" (3).

The French Core Curriculum Guideline is characterized by its detailed analysis of objectives. It recognizes three sets of objectives: language proficiency expressed in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; knowledge about language, and a cultural objective. Each of these is clearly defined and

illustrated by examples. Therefore the objectives are not a few generalities or expressions of pious hopes. They are expressed in such a way that classroom activities can be assigned to given objectives and related to language and maturity levels.

For a given level, e.g., the primary division, it is possible to read off the recommended objectives and sample activities and in this way to tease out from the document a "profile" of objectives and activities proposed for this level. The rationale is that "objectives are not discarded; instead, new ones are added, and the learning activities broadened as the body of structures and vocabulary on which students can draw increases" (4).

Comment: From the point of view of current needs two elements seem to be particularly important in the curriculum conceptualization offered in the Ontario Core French Guideline: one is the emphasis on diversification of objectives: proficiency, knowledge about language, and culture; and the other is the importance attributed to progression, continuity, and coherence. Both aspects were weakly developed in elementary programs, but through the Guideline are legitimized and emphasized.

A possible danger of the Guideline--in spite of the Guideline's insistence on communication as the goal--lies in its emphasis on grammatical structures which may be mistakenly regarded as the 'core' of the core program. Seen out of context and out of proportion it may lend itself to be misinterpreted as an endorsement of a narrowly structural audiolingual emphasis which characterised the programs introduced in the sixties.

Quebec Ministry of Education, 1980. In developing a curriculum guideline for French and English as second languages at the elementary and secondary level, the Ministry of Education has based itself on concepts which derive from European notional and functional approaches. Setting out from a study of language needs among anglophone 6- to 11-year old children, the Ministry published a draft version of a scheme which gives direction to teaching French in the primary and junior grades (1er and 2ieme cycle).

Objectives are defined in terms of six domains: (1) factual information, (2) intellectual attitudes, (3) affective attitudes, (4) moral attitudes, (5) requests, and (6) socialising. Under each of these broad domain headings, the curriculum specifies a context, a topic (focus or synthesis), a situation, a form of behaviour, a general notion, lexical items (vocabulary) and utterances through which this topic is commonly expressed.

Comment: This scheme is carefully thought out and illustrates a well reasoned approach to curriculum in primary and junior grades based on communicative principles. It no doubt has to be supported by further documents on how the programme d'etude is to be implemented. In the meantime it offers an alternative way of looking at the language content to be taught. As such it offers an interesting and useful resource. It is, however, in my view questionable whether the concept of Threshold Level/niveau seuil is so directly applicable in school settings. Adults may have well defined purposes in learning a second language. But in a school setting learning a language has educational purposes of greater variety. The needs cannot be so clearly defined, certainly not by asking the students about their interests.

Rivers, 1981. In the new edition of this standard work on foreign language teaching, Rivers devotes close to 20 pages to the question of early language learning and Foreign Languages in the Elementary School (FLES) in an American setting. Her presentation reflects the doubts and disappointments about FLES in the 1960s. At the same time she recognizes that foreign languages in the elementary school must today be seen in the broader context of bilingual education and English as a second language. In order to obviate future failures she emphasises careful planning and better articulation in language programs. She also discusses alternative programs to the introduction of a foreign language such as exploratory language courses (458) and courses in the context of multicultural and global education (458-9). In conclusion, Rivers proposes under the heading ELL (Early Language Learning):

> "Perhaps a new term is needed to combat the image of obsolescence some associate with the FLES movement of the sixties. The term Early Language Learning (ELL) is being used more and more frequently to cover all forms of language learning by pre-teens: bilingual education, second-language instruction, foreign-language learning, exploratory language courses, and interdisciplinary language-learning activities. As a term, it also leaves the door open for a useful collaboration with teachers of the native language. Language arts teachers have much to contribute to ELL teachers, and their cooperation is essential if the learning of new language is to be integrated with other language and culture related activities in the elementary school program" (462).

Comment: It should be borne in mind that Rivers addresses primarily an American readership for whom even today the teaching of a second language is less obvious than it is to Canadians. But much of what Rivers has to say is equally applicable in a Canadian context, particularly her suggestion of integrating second language and first language teaching, and some of the ideas of exploratory language courses can be incorporated into the French core program or can form part of a program of general language education.

Shapson and Kaufman, 1978. This article describes recent developments in the teaching of French in elementary schools in British Columbia. In spite of the relative lack of exposure to French outside school, the study shows the remarkable increase in elementary French where in 1976-7 59 out of 75 school districts offered French. The research undertaken by Shapson and Kaufman consists (a) of a study of immersion program in Coquitlam and (b) the B.C. French Study. The Immersion Study, which will not be considered here in detail, again showed, as most immersion studies do, the superiority of immersion French over core French: "Grade Three immersion group scored significantly higher than the Grade Seven core French group" (594). The B.C. French Study is a province-wide study, involving in 1976-7 25 school districts. The purpose of the study is to monitor the status of French in the elementary schools of B.C. The project has gathered descriptive information about the program, e.g. program objectives ("lack of stress on reading and writing"), time aspect (20 minutes, 4 days a week), teachers (regular rather than itinerant; many not formally qualified), students' perception of program (generally favourable), grade 7 as a frequent starting date.

Comment: A useful descriptive account of the status of French as a second language in a Western province.

Stern, in press, b. This paper was written in connection with the National Conference on Professional Priorities of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), held in Boston in November 1980. The paper outlined a multidimensional foreign language curriculum, a scheme which was adopted by the Conference and incorporated in a conference statement. The paper put forward the principle that a language course should contain four content areas or

'syllabuses': 1. a linguistic syllabus, 2. a cultural syllabus, 3. a communicative syllabus, and 4. a general language education syllabus. The paper describes the background for this proposal and outlines the four syllabuses. The conference statement elaborates these syllabuses.

Comment: The paper was written with American foreign language education in mind and courses at secondary rather than elementary level. However, the principle is the same at all levels. The contention is that language programs have tended to be too narrowly conceived and consequently lack strength. By proposing a multiple focus (or multidimensional curriculum) "it is intended to give the L2 curriculum greater strength, greater balance, and greater educational impact, and to obviate one of the main objections to current language curricula, triviality of content, lack of substance, lack of impact and, in addition, inadequate language proficiency" (10). The paper is included in the present set of notes because the multiple approach is applicable to the notion of strengthening the early core French program.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion to this report we will now discuss (1) some policy options, and (2) research suggestions.

Policy options

What options arise from this review of the four issues we have considered in this report? As was already indicated in the introduction, on none of them does the literature we have reviewed speak unequivocally. Nevertheless, trends of thought and directions can be indicated. In summarizing them, financial considerations and human constraints, such as availability of teachers, are left out of account. Policy-makers and administrators inevitably have to bear these in mind.

On the age factor the review suggests to the policy-makers to exercise their freedom of action and to be guided by educational considerations and to place the beginning of the core program where it is educationally most advantageous. No single optimal age has been identified. If language learning were purely cognitive, there would be a strong psychological justification to place it later rather than earlier. But if different facets of language and different psychological aspects, social and affective ones, are taken into consideration, as well as the advantages of added time, the earlier start in the primary grades can be entirely justified. The case for a start in the primary grades becomes stronger still if we consider French as part of the 'basic literacy' of young Canadians.

On the time factor, too, there has been no single or simple answer either. We cannot in a dogmatic fashion assert that a class of 20 minutes, 30 minutes, or 40 minutes is either right or wrong. Several factors should come into consideration

in deciding on time allocations. The concept of accumulated hours to which Ontario has committed itself administratively can be recognized as a useful first approximation in making decisions involving time. However, it becomes a dangerous and blunt instrument if it is not used in relation to other factors: distribution of time, age, maturity level, the social and linguistic context, and the available pedagogy. In deciding on time allocation for core French considerations to be borne in mind might be:

(a) in a Toronto setting, to all intents and purposes, French is available to most students only within the class period; therefore too short a class period does not allow enough time for experimenting with, and using, the new language;

(b) if a strong and diversified educational program of early core French is to be provided a time allowance of 30 or 40 minutes makes more sense than a minimal 15 or 20 minutes;

(c) logistically, as was seen in the Ottawa Evaluation study (Stern et al, 1976), the 15- or 20-minute teaching period day is difficult to organize and maintain, especially if French is not taught by the regular class-teacher. However, it does not have to be mechanically 40 minutes at all times. In planning the program different patterns of concentrating or spreading the classtime can be envisaged.

On the question of <u>French for minority children</u> the reading of the recent literature is an invitation to be optimistic about multilingualism and not to be afraid of trilingual education. It is useful to recognize that, although languages sometimes do interfere with each other in the individual, they also support one another. The notion developed by Cummins (1980) of underlying proficiency characteristics which operate in the first language and transfer to the second or vice versa is promising. Since the empirical research on this question is however limited, it might be useful to include the question of French as a third language for minority children among those on which empirical investigations might be proposed.

Finally, on the question of pedagogy, we reach the crux of the matter on which educational policy makers will have to exercise their judgement. Once we have decided on the nature of the core program the other questions of age, time and trilingualism will fall into place.

The central question is how to view the core program. During the last few years the emphasis has been on immersion as if to suggest that immersion was the only really viable way to learn French as a second language. In the long run, it may be extremely important to develop a strong French core program, if only to demonstrate that there are other viable ways of learning French as a second language which, although more limited in scope than immersion, can be, in their own way and on their own terms, just as effective.

If it is planned to develop a stronger and educationally sound and diversified early core program, it will be necessary to estimate what level of proficiency should be reached by, say, the end of grade 8 and what components such an enriched program should have. Once this has been worked out in an approximate way, the next question to consider is: can students be expected to reach this objective in five years (and should therefore core French begin in grade 4?). Alternatively what would be gained by an additional three years by beginning French in grade 1? The decision need not be taken entirely by reference to the ultimate level to be reached by the end of grade 8. A further question to consider would be whether the children at the time of instruction in the primary grades would gain something of value at that stage in their development by being exposed to French.

It is on the basis of considerations of this kind that the policy questions can be answered. Once estimates have been made it would be possible through experimentation and some research, as Swain (1981) has illustrated, to verify whether the estimates are reasonable or should be revised.

Research implications of the review

The review suggests three different kinds of research.

(a) The first is general research on certain fundamental issues. Some of the questions raised by the French Programs Committee go to the heart of basic research on second language learning. The optimal age question is bound up with a better understanding of the nature of the second language learning processes and of psycholinguistic development of language acquisition in children in unilingual, bilingual or trilingual settings. Some of the issues involved as well as questions of bilingual or trilingual proficiency of minority language learners are at present under investigation in a major research project of the OISE Modern Language Centre. It would, therefore, be advisable for the Board to coordinate any research planned in these areas with the OISE second language learning project.

(b) A second group of possible studies is more specific to the immediate interests of the Toronto Board in the planning and development of its own French program. Since the question of a French core program from grade 1 or from grade 4 is likely to be a matter of uncertainty and may even become a subject of controversy for the reasons outlined in Section 3 (French for Minority Children), it should be considered as a possible topic for research which would help the Board to weigh up the advantages of starting French in grade 1 or 4. Some of the implications of an earlier versus a later start have already been discussed. But the demand for an early start at grade 1 on the part of groups of parents, and a possible change in the current policy, may justify a closer examination of this issue.

The possibility of undertaking such a study within the Board's present provision is given, since some schools have in fact a grade 1 start altough the majority of schools begin French in grade 4.

In addition to comparisons within the Board it might also be possible to make comparisons with other boards which have established and are evaluating a grade 1 start.

Research, comparing French at two different grade levels, would put in place instruments which could also be useful in the regular evaluation of the French core program.

As part of research on a grade 1 versus a grade 4 start an additional study might be planned which would be concerned with teaching French as an additional language to minority language children.

(c) A third area of enquiry arises from the view presented in this report of a stronger core French program. If, in the light of the considerations discussed in this report, it is found to be necessary to expand core French and to introduce changes in the program, it may be useful to initiate these changes through a curriculum research-and-development project on the core French program. Such a project would plan, investigate, develop and pilot an expanded French core curriculum. If the tenor of this report is accepted there is no question that the development of a strong French core program should be a high priority for many boards which are at present engaged in implementing the French Curriculum Guideline 1980.

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